

THE
TENETS
OF THE
Buckinghamshire
ANABAPTISTS

Expos'd and Censur'd,

In some late LETTERS

BETWIXT A

Minister of the Church of England,

And One of the

Anabaptist Perswasion.

L O N D O N :

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THE PREFACE.

THE following Letters were occasion'd by some Attempts that had been made by a zealous Anabaptist, to soften and incline a very honest and sincere Member of the Establish'd Church to think favourably of the Anabaptist Way. They are both Parishioners of mine, and near Neighbours to each other; whose frequent Intercourses had often caus'd private Disputes between them concerning the Mode and Subjects of Christian Baptism. Upon certain Information that I was now and then appeal'd to from the Anabaptist Side, (viz.) that I would allow of such and such Things to be true, and that I would grant other Matters, as in their several Conferences were suggested, to be fact and undeniable, I was resolv'd to step in, and interest my self a little in the Debate, the better to set such Things right, that might be otherwise apprehended from a mistaken Authority. And accordingly, the very next Opportunity I had of seeing my Anabaptist Neighbour, I offer'd him some few Sketches concerning such Matters as, I thought, did the most sensibly affect the Points in Difference, the better to introduce what had so often pass'd betwixt him and his Friend. The Arguments indeed were very short on both Sides, and we presently came to this amicable Resolution, That I should send him three or four Queries, and that he would consider and answer them with all the Sincerity and Candour that became a Christian. This occasioned my first Letter to him, which (I am well assured) was handed about from Person to Person, and from one

The P R E F A C E.

remote Place to another, for six Weeks together, till at length it produced the Answer contained in the second Letter : To which I soon reply'd, so far as concerned the first Query, with a Promise of sending the rest in due Time. I took the Opportunity of conveying the Reply by the Hands of that very Person upon whom the Attempts of Seducement were first made, thinking that he, who had before sustain'd the Combate, and might have been baffled and overcome in it, was very proper to carry these new Weapons, to defend himself against a fresh Attack. It was with great Conflicts and Struggling left with his Anabaptist Neighbour, he making many Protestations that he would not receive it, that he would not read it, and that he would trouble himself no farther about the Debate. And, indeed, he was in part as good as his Word, for before that very Evening he hastened it back to me again, by a poor innocent Woman of his own Sect, and so the Controversy ended. I must own I never had the least Thought of exposing these Papers to Publick View ; but since what was so seriously and Christian-like intended by me, has been so rudely answered ; and since a Reply so well meant has been so scornfully and indecently rejected, and least any Misconstructions from the vulgar Sort should follow upon it ; I have now determined that the World shall see them, and judge of them. And accordingly I have put the Whole together in one single and entire Piece, from whence a true Judgment may be made what sort of Treatment is shewn towards the Christian Religion, and the true Orthodox Professors of it, by those of the Anabaptist Perswasion.



LETTER I.

SIR,



As you have permitted me to send the following Queries, and have promised a *sincere and candid* Answer to 'em, I think it highly necessary, first of all, to lay down a brief State of the Case, concerning those Matters that unhappily divide us, before I proceed to the Queries themselves.

The Charity and Indulgence of the Church of England (and indeed of all Christian Churches throughout the World) is such, that she admits, very early, the *Children of believing Parents* to Holy Baptism. As for adult or grown Persons, she ever invites 'em to it, and will always receive them, at any Age, or at what Time soever, they shall offer themselves for it.

Her Practice also, as to the Matter of Baptism, is unlimited and free, so as to use Water, either by *sprinkling or dipping*, with an equal Indifferency. Indeed, her Tenderness towards Infants, in this Northern Climate of ours, rather moves and inclines her to sprinkle than dip; yet she has declared her self ready and willing to do the one, as well as the other, if Parents or adult Persons should desire it of her.

The Opinion of your Sect is absolutely to disavow the Baptism of Infants, and to declare it a Nullity, howsoever and by whomsoever administered, and to admit of adult or grown Persons only, as the proper Subjects of it. And even in grown Persons, if they are not plunged or dipped all over
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in Water, your Opinion or Declaration is, that it must not be esteemed Vaild Baptism.

So that you see, the Difference betwixt us, as to the Subjects and Matter of Christian Baptism, lies only in this, That you make the Age of the Person baptized (receiving none to it but what are of full Years) and the very great Quantity of Water sufficient to cover the Person in it, both essentially necessary to the Ministration of this Sacrament. Whereas we observe no Distinction of Age, but take Infants to be entituled to Holy Baptism equally with adult Persons; neither do we look upon the Quantity of Water, whether they be sprinkled with or dipp'd in it, to create any material Difference in the Design and Meaning of that sacred Rite.

The Consequences of this Opinion or Perswasion of your's (which you would do well to read) are, First, an unwarrantable Separation from the Church of Christ, began in *Germany, Cir. An. Ch. 1524*, and since carried on with no small Industry in this our Nation, especially under the late great Rebellion. And, Secondly, erecting Conventicles in Opposition to the establish'd Community, and placing the meanest and lowest of the People in 'em (like the Sin of *Jeroboam*) unauthoritatively to minister in divine Things. In this divided separate State you now worship and serve your God; hearing his holy Word and Doctrine from the Mouths of such unskilful unauthoriz'd Teachers, as Persons duly commission'd and sent by him; and receiving at their Hands the most sacred and solemn Rite of Christian Baptism, as legal and undoubted Administrators of it.

The Queries I would propose to you, as naturally resulting from the Case I have now stated it, are,

Quer. I. How doth it any ways appear (by a fair and equitable Construction of Things) either from the legal Dispensation deliver'd in the *Old Testament*,

by the Evangelical one contained in the *New*, from the concurrent Practice of the Primitive times thereupon; That Infants of Believing Parents are to be refused Christian Baptism, and that adult or grown Persons only are to be admitted to

Quer. II. Whether the great Quantity of Water, sufficient to dip or plunge a Person in it, be so indispensibly necessary to Baptism, that it cannot be essential and valid without it: Or whether the real Intent and Design in Baptism may not as well be answer'd by a less Quantity as by a greater?

Quer. III. If the Church of *England* equally admits of Infants with adult Persons to Holy Baptism, and if she will use the largest Quantity of Water by dipping, as well as a less Quantity by sprinkling, when desir'd so to do; then what Excuse can be alledged, or Pretence made for separating from her Communion, only because she retains the Chastity of Infant Baptism?

These Queries naturally arise from the Difference of our Opinions and Sentiments concerning the Subjects and Matter of Baptism.

I must not here omit Two more, which necessarily follow from the Consequences of your Perswasion; and, I think, they will very sensibly affect the pretended Administrators of this Holy Sacrament, and more especially, all you that have received it at their Hands.

Quer. I. Whether such mere Pretenders to preach the Word of God, and administer the Holy Sacraments, as are now pick'd out from among you, without any Ordination or regular Mission thereunto, as God himself hath appointed, may not be justly comprehended under that severe Reprehension, *Jer. xxiii. 31, 32. Behold, I am against the Prophets, saith the Lord; that use their Tongues, and say, He saith. Behold, I am against those that prophesie false Dreams, saith the Lord, and do tell them, and cause*
my

my People to err by their Lies and by their Lightness; yet I sent them not, nor commanded them: therefore they shall not profit this People at all, saith the Lord.

Quer. II. Whether you can sit down contentedly under the Ministration of such Invaders and Intruders into the Vineyard; and particularly whether you have not good Reason to suspect the Validity of that Baptism you have receiv'd from 'em and accordingly to sue for it at the Hands of those who have an *undoubted Authority and Commission* to confer it?

These are the several Queries you gave leave for my sending to you, and which you promised to consider with all the Sincerity as becomes a Christian, and to return a fair and candid Answer to them. I beg of you to do it, and withal to consider them in the Order and Method I have laid 'em down. And the better to help you forward to find out their Truth, let me subjoyn Two Cautions.

1. Strictly to pursue those Means, and those only, that naturally and directly tend to it. And,
2. To bring your self under such a Temper and Disposition of Heart and Mind, as will move and induce you to consider and hearken impartially to its Dictates.

As to the first, you cannot but observe, That every kind of Truth is not capable of the same manner of Illustration. Matters of Faith and Credibility are not invertigable by Mathematical Propositions; neither are Things of a more divine positive Institution always to be understood by the Principles of Reason; But different Kinds of Truth require different Arguments, and different Methods to arrive at the Knowledge of them.

So as to the second, You must consider that it is no rational Plea, that you should be tenacious of an Opinion, or continue the Practice of it, because it was deriv'd to you from your Parents, or hath been observed or followed by you for so long a Time

Time. Paganism might have urged such a Pretence
 in Bar to the Attacks of Christianity, and might
 have pleaded that they ought to remain Heathens,
 till, because they and their Forefathers were so
 before them. And every Sect among us, how wild
 soever, may now alledge the same; and say,
 that they ought to be Presbyterians, Independents,
 Anabaptists, Quakers, and what not, because they
 and their Ancestors have been so during such a long
 Continuance. Such Family Influences, and all o-
 ther Prepossessions of the like Nature, must be
 carefully abstracted and avoided by you; and your
 self must be put into an equal Poise, and a steady
 Indifferency towards Truth, if ever you expect to
 attain to it. And let it be your Prayer, as it is
 daily mine, That God Almighty would please to
 bring into the way of Truth, all such as have erred,
 and are deceived.

I am

Yours.

Dec. 3. 1722.

LETTER II.

Sir,

Send this in Answer to yours, I have carefully
 read over and considered, what you gave me;
 and make this Reply. With the Candor of a Man,
 and I hope a Christian; which is a Character I
 would be not willing to allow to Persons of my
 Perswasion.

You desire my Answer may be made according to
 the Order in which you have ranged your Epistle; To
 which Request I have conform'd, and therefore shall
 not trouble you nor my selfe, with repeating much
 of what you have written.

The Charity and Indulgence of your Church, is
 indeed to be admir'd at, for admitting such to
 Baptism, that the Gospell knows nothing of: And as

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for grown Persons, that offer themselves for Baptism (if besides thair Age they are quallified as the Gospell directs) 'Tis no Compliment to Jesus Christ the Head of his Church to admit them to Baptism.

Our Sect, (as you are pleased to call them) disavows the Baptism of Infants, and I think with very good Reason; unless it can be made appear, that according to the Institution of Christ in this Case; they are to be admitted thereto; and on the same foot, we justly dislike the Practice of sprinkling, unless it can be made appear that sprinkling, and dipping, are the same thing.

I cannot omit observing; that you are pleased to afford the Name of Christian, to all those who practice Baby Sprinkling, while you give a reproachfull Title (that of a Sect) to those who keep close to the Appointment of Christ, and his Apostles in the Affair under Consideration; (as you put your self alow) but this is no new thing, because we finde, it was the Treatment the Primitive Christians met with from the angry Priests in thair Day (*Acts xxviii. v. 22.*) and therefore 'tis no wonder it should be so now.

And as to what you say is the State of the Controversy between us, I must begg Leave to observe; that it is not a Strife about Words, that is about a little or much Water, but whether sprinkling or dipping is Baptism, your Church out of its great Indulgence, agrees with us, that dipping is right; and we believe that sprinkling is rong; because it hath not the least footing in the Word of God; as I can see at present. Nor do we insist on the Age of the Person; as you seem to intimate, but whensoever penitent Believers offer themselves for Baptism, we then admit them to it, according to the divine Commission, and apostolic Practice.

The Consequences of our Opinion you say; are first a separating from the Church of Christ; and

Answer to this, I would have you consider, whether there can be a true visible Church of Christ without true Baptism: and as you allow our Baptism to be true, and have not yet proved your own to be so, how then can you fairly say of us, that we separate from the Church of Christ, since we practice only that Baptism, that Christ Jesus the Head of the Church hath appointed.

As to the Sneer you give about the People in *Germany* 'tis not worthy of Notice, we take our Date from Christ, and his Apostles, and are not beholden to a Rout in *Germany*. nor the filthy Hands, and bloody Skirts of *Rome*, for our Ordinance, nor Ordination. And if there ware any of our Denomination in the Rebellion you mention; I know nothing of them, nor can that be any Argument against the Justice of our Cause, at present insisted on, any more, then if I should say, that the finding Parson *Paul* and others of his Complexion, in a Rebellion against King *Georg*, would prove your Church to be a Sect, as you are pleased to call ours.

As to the maintaining seperat Meetings which you call Conventicles from the Established Church; this is what we think we ought to do, in order to answer a good Conscience towards God. And, Sir, I think you will do well to consider, that a near legal Establishment, may as well serve the Church of *Rome* to plead against you, as it will you against us, for you cannot but know, that in thair Eye your Assemblys are as much Conventicles as ours, can by you be thought to be.

But what you mean by our placing the meanest and lowest of the People in our Conventicles (as you call them) not knowing what you mean thereby; shall leave that untill I better know your Meaning. But as to thair Authority to minister in divine Things, they have as much, nay I think more from the Word of God then you, and so much from

the Laws of the Realm, that blessed be God you cannot hinder altho' you are so angry at it, and therefore looking upon them to be duly authorized, we beleive we do well to receive Baptism at thair Hands, as the only lawful Administrators of it; being themselves baptized Beleivers, into the Church of Christ, and cal'd and sent by the Church of Christ, to minister his Word and Ordinances to his People; and therefore as to the Case of *Jeroboham*, I think that well deserves your own Consideration in your own Cause.

I now come to your Queries.

And as to the first of them I conceive that it doth appear from the legal Dispensation: because in that Dispensation the Lord did forbid any thing to be added to, or diminished from what he commanded them as you see, *Duter. iv. v. 2. Prov. xxx. 5, 6.* for the Lord was so displeased with some, who did Things in his Worship which he had not commanded, that he sent Fire from Heaven and devoured them, *Levit. x. 1, 2.* And it doth appear from the Dispensation of the Gospell, and Practice of Christ's Apostles, as plaine for the same Reason. Because Christ hath not commanded Infants to be baptized, and therefore his Apostles did not baptize any, and having no Command from Christ nor President from his immediat Followers for Infants Baptism, therefore thay ought not I think to be baptized.

As to your second Querie, I answer that in my Judgment it is of absolute Nefesity, that there should be so much Water, as will cover the Person, otherwise they cannot be said to be buried with Christ in Baptism, as the Apostle saith, *Rom. vi. 4. Col. ii. 12.* nor the Signification of the Word as far as I can larn, therefore the End of Baptism cannot be answer'd, with a les Quantity of Water, then will cover the Person baptized.

As to your third Querie, I answer, by saing I do not see, that it is in the Power of any Church, to alter an Institution of Christ Jesus; neither can I see how any thing can answer the End of the great Legislator, so well, as a close adhearing to his own Appointment and Example, and that of his immediate Followers.

And as to the Queries of the second Sort, I thus answer, that our Ministers are not only Pretenders, but real Preachers of the Word, proving all they say, by that blessed Record the Word of God, and for you to say that they are without any Ordination, or regular Mission, is a bold Presumption without Proof, only ventured on without knowing better, and so was your Text of Scripture, you set down, *Jer. xxiii. 21. 22.* but what you mean is in the *31, 32 Vers.* and as falsely apply'd as qoted, in my Judgment. For you should have first shewn, that they pretend to prophesie after the sort of those false Prophets there spoken of, being to foretell Things which the Lord had not reveal'd; but our Ministers do not pretend to any such Spirit of Prophesie, and therefore your Insinuation is ungenteel. And as to thair Doctrine and Practice of Baptism, (which is the thing under Consideration) you your self have allow'd that to be true, being what you say, you are ready to practice when requir'd of you, And doth not this more directly fall upon your self, who teach the People that Infants ought to be baptized, and that Sprinkling is Baptism, without any Revelation from God to prove it? and doth not the Event prove it to be so, according to the Conclusion of your Text, therefore (*i. e.*) because the Lord did not send nor command these Prophets, therefore they shall not prophet this People at all, saith the Lord?

As

As to your second Querie of this Sort, I answer that our Ministers are neither Invadors nor Intruders into the Vineyard; for as by the Vineyard, I think you mean the Church of God; and as there can be no true visible Church of God without true Baptism, even so your acknowledgning, that we have true Baptism, therefore we are a true visible Church of God: And our Ministers are not Invadors of us, nor Intruders into our Churches, because they themselves are first chosen by us to be our Ministers, and ordained to be our Pastors, as such whom we have chosen, before they act in that Capacity, which is more then you have to say for your selfe, who have been sent to act over the People without thair Choice or Consent, before you was set over them, therefore most likly to be the Invador and Intruder into that Church, in whome you act as a Presbyter. And as we have chosen our Ministers to preach and administer the Word and Baptism to us, so we rest our selves satisfied of the Validity of that Baptism we have received from them, and think it impossible, that such Ministers, who have not received true Baptism themselves, should have an undoubted Authority and Commission to confer it upon others.

As for your Advise, I desire your will apply it to your selfe, and as for your Prayers I thank you, and as a return of Gratitude do assure you that you shall have mine on the same Account you say I and all have yours.

I am Sir,

Yours.

Receiv'd this Letter
Jan. 26. 1722-3.

L E T.

LETTER III.

Sir,

Have receiv'd a Reply to the Queries I sent you: And, indeed, I cannot help saying, That it is the weakest, the most scurrilous and abusive Reply that ever was receiv'd; considering, more particularly, upon what Occasion it was wrote, the Person to whom it is transmitted, and the little or no Provocation that was given for such an ill sort of Treatment. I expected to have seen a Piece well freighted with good Sense and good Manners, answerable to the Gravity and *Seriousness* of my Queries, and according to the Ability of the Person who undertook the Reply. But instead of this, I can perceive almost nothing else to be contain'd in it, besides bold confident Assertions, and positive *Ipse Dixit's*, without the least Colour of Argument or Reason to support and defend them: Neither do I see any thing in it worthy of Notice, unless it be the abundance of ill Language and reproachful Insinuations (with which it is plentifully stuff'd) very highly misbecoming one who would be thought a Christian Writer, and, I think deserving of another sort of Animadversion, than that of a mere Remark.

I'll assure you, Neighbour, whoever your Author is, he hath done a great deal of Injury to your Cause; not only by the poorness and meaness of the Defence, but in personating you in such an angry, passionate, reflecting Manner and Method of Controversy. You, your self, are very well appriz'd, that you are concern'd with one, who has a little more Sense and Understanding than to take Positiveness and Confidence for Proof, and of better Carriage and more civil Behaviour than to deserve the unhandsome Interspersions of base
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Scurrility in the Management of it. Such a Procedure (as your Author must needs know) will necessarily create an Idea of the Weakness and Unjustness of your Cause; and, instead of advantaging it, must give it the greatest Prejudice and Distaste in the Eyes of sober and judicious People, when they see it come arm'd and supported, not by Argument and Reason, but by *Noise*, Calumny, and Slander.

I appeal to a repeated Inspection of my Queries, and the Inferences advanc'd from them; whether your Epistolizer can discover any Words or Expressions that have dropt from me, whereby to irritate and provoke him to such an ungentle Treatment. Let him look them over, and over again, and I challenge him to produce any thing out of them that deviates from Truth, or is unbecoming the Character of a Gentleman and Christian. The only Aim and Design I had in View (as you are very sensible) when I first propos'd, and afterwards sent the Queries to you, was to offer a fair and friendly Experiment betwixt us (to which you willingly gave your Assent) to try, whether we might not *speak the same thing, that there be no Divisions among us, and be perfectly join'd together in the same Mind, and in the same Judgment*, as the Apostle commands us. And as there was not the least Incitement in me to advance any thing but what was consonant to the Words of Sincerity and Meekness, so I hope it does not appear that I have said any thing but what becomes, not only the *Candor of a Man*, but the Sincerity and Candor of an *honest Man*.

But pray, Neighbour, let me beg of you to look over your own Transcript once more (which if you had carefully done before you had sent it, I dare say, you would never have expos'd your self nor your Friends so far, as to suffer it to come abroad.)

What

What a Reverse of Treatment is there shewn, even beyond all Possibility of Comparison of what I have given you? What a fine Tincture of Reproaches, Revilings, and downright Calumnies, will you perceive to run through the Work? How many scornful Parentheses and reflecting Digressions will you find it to be stuff'd with? Such as not only reflect an Odium upon my self, but cast the basest Stain and Slur upon our whole Clergy, Church, and Constitution; and that in a more virulent and appropriate Manner, so far as Words can reach, than they ever receiv'd from the Church of *Rome*. If it will not be too great a Reproach and Shame to your Modesty, give me Leave to lay them before you in one single View; from whence the World may judge, from the Boldness and Heinousness of them, whether they don't merit another, and more severe sort of Chastisement, than what comes from the gentle Strokes of the

1. The Church of *England* is no true visible Church of Christ, because it has no true Baptism, yet prov'd.

2. The Clergy of the Church of *England* are beholden to the filthy Hands, and bloody Skirts of *Rome* for their Ordinance and Ordination.

3. The Church of *England* Clergy have not receiv'd true Baptism themselves, and therefore have no undoubted Authority and Commission to confer it upon others.

4. The Clergy of the Church of *England* are not those whom God hath sent, but false Prophets; because they teach the People that Infants ought to be Baptized, and that sprinkling is Baptism, without any Revelation from God to prove it.

5. The Anabaptist Teachers are called and sent by the Church of Christ, are real Preachers of the Word, being first chosen by the People to be their Ministers, and ordained to be their Pastors. The Clergy of the Church of *England* have been sent to act over the People without their Choice or Consent, and therefore are Invaders and Intruders into those Churches in which they act as Presbyters.

6. The Anabaptist Teachers have more Authority to minister in divine Things, from the Word of God, than the Church of *England* Ministers have.

7. The Anabaptist Teachers are duly authorized, and are the ONLY Administrators of Baptism; that Act of the Ministers of the Church of *England* is Baby-sprinkling.

These, Neighbour, are, all of them, the bold daring, confident Assertions of your Epistolizer which he has deliver'd with a more hardened Forehead (without the least Dram of Proof) than the rankest Heretick ever yet pretended to broach his Tenets to the World. If he had had either Sense or good Manners, one would think, he durst not advance such mischievous distastful Positions: And as he has advanc'd them, if he consulted his

own Interest and Reputation, one would imagine, that he must have some good Proof in Reserve to support and defend them. And truly if he has, I think, it highly behoves him forthwith to shew it, that we may set all the Christian Churches throughout the World under a better Model, and upon a better Footing than they at present stand. For according to his Scheme, there can be no true visible Church of Christ but what is to be found in their Conventicles; and by Consequence, all the Christian Churches throughout the World must be accounted no better than Congregations of Heathens and Infidels, excluded from the Covenant of Grace, having no visible Right to the Redemption wrought by Christ: And there can be no Power and Authority to preach the Word, and administer the Sacraments, but what is to be met with in their Teachers; and therefore all the Acts and Deeds of this Kind done by the Clergy, must be mere Usurpation and Nullity, unauthoritative Babbling and *Babysprinkling*, thereby damning themselves, and sending Millions into Eternal Perdition. Your Author a little too blasphemously talks of *Complimenting Jesus Christ*, but I am sure these flagrant dreadful Assertions of his can be no Compliment to his Catholick Church; and more especially to that Part of it whereunto we belong, and from whose great Favour you receive your present Indulgence: Since they at once unchurch all the Members of it, and reduce them again to a State of Paganism, and renders its Ministers false Teachers and base Usurpers, wickedly contriving the Ruin and Destruction of those Souls for whom Christ hath died.

I have done tracing your Author's dirty Steps through the abusive and scurrilous Part of his Reply ; I shall now follow him a little further through the argumentative Part of it : And how very cogent, strenuous, and conclusive every Proposition will appear, the Reader shall see by and by, when I have dissected and taken it in Pieces. The Queries I sent to you, and submitted to your own private and retired Thoughts, were,

Quer. I. How doth it any ways appear (by a fair and equitable Construction of Things) either from the legal Dispensation delivered in the *Old Testament*, or by the Evangelical one contain'd in the *New*, or from the concurrent Practice of the Primitive Times thereupon, That Infants of believing Parents are to be refused Christian Baptism, and that adult and grown Persons only are to be admitted to it ?

This Query, you see, consists of three Parts or Members, The legal Dispensation, The evangelical one, and the concurrent Practice of the Primitive Times. To the two First your Author seems to reply, but wholly omits and passes by the Third ; which he should not have done, considering of how great Service it would have been to your Cause (if he could have pick'd out any thing from thence) to prove the *Date of your Perswasion from Jesus Christ*. The first Member or Part of the Query he answers in these Words.

" I conceive it doth appear (what it is that doth
 " appear he does not tell us) because in that
 " Dispensation the Lord did forbid any
 " thing to be added to, or diminished from what
 " he commanded them, as you see, *Deut. Ch. iv.*
 " *v. 2. Prov. xxx. 5, 6,* For the Lord was so

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displeased with some, who did Things in his
 Worship which he had not commanded, that he
 sent Fire from Heaven and devoured them." This is the Reply he makes, and backs it with
 such a terrible Instance, as if he had a Design
 to fright his Answerer into Amaze and Silence
 at once, *the Lord sent Fire from Heaven and de-
 voured them who did Things in his Worship which he
 had not commanded.* Now, for my Part, I don't
 in the least apprehend what the Author here
 means (if he intends any meaning in it) or how
 he could bring this Passage in by Head and Shoul-
 ders, as a Proof against Infant Baptism. That
 because in the legal Dispensation *the Lord did
 forbid any thing to be added to, or diminished from
 what he commanded them,* therefore Infants of be-
 lieving Parents are to be refused Christian Bap-
 tism: Or, to speak a little more intelligibly, be-
 cause *Moses* prohibited the People of *Israel* from
 making any Addition to or Diminution from those
 Statutes and Judgments he had deliver'd to them
 under the Law, therefore we must not observe
 those Precepts and Ordinances that are handed
 down to us through the Gospel.

Was there ever such Stuff as this obtruded
 upon the World for true Argument and Reason?
 or did ever any Man meet with such a Citation,
 so distant and alien from the present Purpose,
 and indeed from any Purpose at all? Surely your
 Author betrays a great Defect in his Apprehen-
 sions and Notions concerning these two Dispen-
 sations, when he so odly and so impertinently
 brings a Proof from the one to overthrow what
 is enjoyn'd in the other. He does not consider
 (if he knows it) that the legal Dispensation was
 to have its Period, and be done away when the
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Fulness of Time came, and that it was alter'd and chang'd in a great many Things, and in part done away when our Saviour appear'd in the World. And the Reason why it was so is told us, because most of its Rites and Ceremonies had their Completion, and were punctually fulfilled in Christ and Christianity, *Col. ii. 16, 17, 22. Rom. vii. 4, 6. Heb. ix. 8, 9, 10. Ch. x. 1*; and many of them were inconsistent with the nature of a manly, free, and universal Church, such as Christ intended his to be, *Gal. iii. 24. Ch. iv. 1, 2.* and therefore they were for very good Reasons abolish'd and laid aside. So that for him to alledge Citations of Things from an abolish'd Dispensation, that have long ago been at an End, and have no manner of Reference or Relation to Matters afterwards appointed, is a very wrong and mistaken way of Proof, and argues a weak Thought in that Man, who uses it concerning the nature of the Dispensations both of the *Old and New Testament.* His Argument from thence, if it carries any Weight in it, must conclude not only against Infant Baptism, but even against Christianity and the Gospel it self; since these are Additions to and Diminutions from what the Lord had commanded under the ancient Religion of the *Jews*, and that by the Appointment and Direction of the *great Law-giver Jesus Christ* himself, who is both able to save and to destroy. It must at once impeach and arraign both the Authority and Acts of our blessed Saviour and all his Apostles, for prescribing and enjoyning so many Things in the Gospel so diametrically opposite to those contained in the Law. For what Authority had he to abolish the Sacrifices, to alter the Levitical Priesthood, and to change the Ordinances of the ancient

ment legal Dispensation; and to substitute others in their Room, and oblige future Ages to a Practice of and a Conformity with them? If (according to your Author's Way of arguing) *the Lord did forbid any Thing to be added to or taken from what he had before commanded.* I suppose he did not intend his Reply should be stretch'd to such blasphemous and wicked Inferences: But, for all that, it will have these, and a great many more dreadful Consequences and Inferences necessarily resulting from it. For all the Acts of our Saviour must be perfectly unauthoritative, his Gospel must become a Nullity, and the Old Law must be still in Force, if this Prohibition here cited, of *adding to or diminishing from what the Lord had commanded,* must be construed to extend it self to Things done and practis'd under both Dispensations.

The Instance here alledg'd to corroborate and support the Argument is as impertinent and frivolous as the Argument it self, *For the Lord was so displeased with some, who did Things in his Worship which he had not commanded, that he sent Fire from Heaven and devoured them, Lev. x. 1, 2.* If your Author had brought this Instance under the Topick of the Authority of your Teachers, and had applied it (as he ought to have done) to those unwarrantable Acts of Theirs in the Ministration of divine Things, it had been ten thousand times more pertinent, than to alledge it here in the Case of Infants Baptism. For (if he consults the Text) he will find the *Some*, as he calls them, to be *Nadab and Abihu*, and the *Things which they did in God's Worship* to be the taking either of them his Censer, and putting Fire thereon, and offering strange Fire before the Lord, which he commanded them not. This was the Offence of these two pre-
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sumptuous Priests, for which *the Lord was so displeased*: Their adventuring without any Order from God, to go and burn Incense in the Sanctuary, which *Aaron* only was commanded to perform: *Sine Vocatione, thus obtulerunt*, saith *Bochartus*, they offered Incense without any Call to it. And because they did so, *there went out Fire from the Lord, and devoured them, and they died before the Lord*. From whence this Inference ought truly and justly to be made (not any thing relating to the Baptism either of Infants or adult Persons) That it is a bold daring Presumption for Men out of their own proper Motion and Opinion, and without any Authority from God, for whose Order they ought to wait, unwarrantably to take upon them the Ministration of Divine Things.

How your Author could stretch this Instance to the Case of Infants Baptism, I cannot conceive. He might as well and with as good Reason, have said, That the Earth opened her Mouth and swallowed up *Corah, Dathan, and Abiram*, for wickedly aspiring at the Priesthood, therefore Infants of believing Parents are to be refused Christian Baptism. Certainly he might have found out a more apt and proper Instance (if he durst adventure upon it) and that is the Command of *Circumcision*. This your Author well knows was a positive Institution of God Almighty's under the legal Dispensation, *Gen. xvii.* strictly commanded even to Infants of eight Days old, *ver. 12*, as a Sign and Seal of the Covenant betwixt God and his People. From hence he had room for solid Argument, and might have framed something or other, either to his Purpose or to mine, if he dared to do it. I must be forced to make it for him, because the Consequences will
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press so hard against his Antipædo-baptist Principles, that he dares not frame it himself. Come on then. God commanded Infants to be circumcised under the legal Dispensation, therefore they are not to be refused Christian Baptism under the Evangelical One : Because *in that Dispensation the Lord did forbid any Thing to be added to, or diminished from what he commanded.* (Which must refer, if your Author means any thing, to Matters since establish'd and practis'd under the Gospel ; otherwise his Quotations are impertinent indeed and altogether Nonsense, the Law being long ago ceased.) But Baptism having succeeded under the Gospel in the Place of Circumcision, not as the Antitype did in the place of the Type ; but as one absolute Ordinance or positive Institution doth in the Room of another, *Col. ii. 11, 12* ; therefore God hath now commanded it under that Dispensation, and Infants must be baptized, as before they were circumcised under the Law. To be *serious*, Neighbour, this Argument, if well apprehended, will clear all the Difficulties that are raised against Infants Baptism. *Circumcision made without Hands*, (which St. Paul plainly calls Baptism, *Col. 2.*) succeeding in the room of that *made with Hands*, Infants must be intituled to this now, as they were to the other before, and they must be still qualify'd to be admitted into Covenant with God by the *spiritual*, as before they were by the *Carnal Circumcision* ; and also Circumcision being chang'd into Baptism without any change of Time, this must still continue upon the old Foot, without some express Command to the contrary, and I defy all of your's, or any Perswasion, to shew me the least Command to the contrary.

I have abundance of Pardon to ask of my Reader for detaining him so long upon this part of the Query, especially when the Author's Reply to it appears at first reading to be so very weak and *frivolous*, that it scarcely deserves a serious Answer. I'll promise to be more concise and compendious in considering the Reply he makes to the second Part of it, (*viz.*) The Evangelical Dispensation contain'd in the *New Testament*. To this he answers (in the same Method of Impertinence and Nonsense) "And it doth appear from the Dispensation of the Gospel, and Practice of Christ's Apostles as plain for the same Reason; Because Christ hath not commanded Infants to be baptized, and therefore his Apostles did not baptize any: And having no Command from Christ, nor President from his immediate Followers for Infants Baptism, therefore they ought not, I think, to be baptized"; I must own I am at a great Loss to find out the Meaning of this Jingle; the Construction of it must lie in the latter Part, *having no Command from Christ, nor President from his immediate Followers for Infants Baptism, therefore* (for the same Reason as that given under the legal Dispensation) *they ought not to be baptized*. Pray, Neighbour, observe by the by; the Reason your Author gives in his Reply to the legal Dispensation is this, *Because God hath commanded*: The Reason here given (which he calls the same Reason) is, *Because Christ hath not commanded*. But be that as it will. It is sufficient and satisfactory enough in the present Case, to be assur'd that Christ hath no where forbid Infants to be baptized, and therefore they may be baptized. For as there is a plain Succession of Ordinances, Baptism being instituted in the Room of Circumcision, and In-

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Infants being always before received into Covenant
 by that Rite; if it had not been our Saviour's
 Mind that they should still be so receiv'd by
 Baptism, he would in some Part or other of his
 Gospel plainly and openly have declared as much.
 The Apostles, to whom he gives the Commission
 to baptize all Nations, having been born and
 bred *Jews*, receiving Infant Circumcision them-
 selves, and observing the Practice of it through-
 out their whole Nation, would every one of 'em
 have propos'd the Query to our Lord, if they had
 any Diffidence or Distrust upon them that it was
 not his Intention they should baptize Infants.
 Nay, the whole Convert Part of the *Jews* them-
 selves would have started the Objection, and said,
 What Provision must there be made for our Chil-
 dren? Must not they be brought into Covenant
 under the Gospel, as they were under the Law?
 And they would have been very much offended at
 it, if they had thought in the least that it had
 been the Mind of Christ that their Children
 should not be baptiz'd. But our Saviour no
 where forbidding it, nor his Apostles at any Time
 questioning it, neither the People at all doubting
 it, is beyond all Contradiction that the Lord al-
 low'd of it. And if you take in what was said
 before of Baptism succeeding in the Place of
 Circumcision, you'll see that there was no man-
 ner of Occasion for any particular express Precept
 or Command in the Gospel concerning it; be-
 cause the same Thing, as to its Intent and Mean-
 ing, having been all along practis'd before, it
 might be taken for granted that, without a Pro-
 hibition to the contrary, it was intended to be
 practis'd on still. And before I dismiss this Point,
 give me leave to propose a few Questions to your
 own Consideration. Was not God the God of

the Infants of the *Jews*, and is he not so of the Christians? Why therefore should you now shut up the Mercies, and lessen the Family of God, by excluding so many Millions of Souls from Covenant with him, whom before he readily received, nay, peremptorily demanded? Is not the Gospel a much better and more glorious Covenant than the Law? Why therefore do you represent the blessed Jesus less kind under the one, than *Moses* was under the other? Why should you suppose our Lord not to embrace and adopt the tender Innocence of these, who are propounded as a Pattern for all that enter into his Kingdom, *Mat. xviii. 3. Chap. xix. 13, 14*? And why are those, whom all that enter in are to be like, not capable of entering in themselves? Consider the Force of these Queries, and give them some Room among your more private and retired Thoughts.

Here is a pretty sort of Conclusion your Author makes from the Baptism of Infants being not commanded; *Christ hath not commanded Infants to be baptized, and therefore his Apostles did not baptize any.* Which had been ten thousand Times better argued if he had said, *Christ hath not forbid Infants to be baptized, therefore his Apostles did baptize them.* For (as I said before,) there was no Reason for a Command in the Case, the same Thing as to the Intent of it, being all along throughout so many Ages done before; and it not being any where forbid, it might be taken for granted that it was still to go on as before. And accordingly the Apostles without doubt used it, and so understood it in their several Commissions that they were to use it, *Go disciple all Nations, &c.* And with what Face can your Author assert that Christ's Apostles did not baptize Infants

ants? Where is it told him that they did not? Let him shew us the Place if he can? Is not the contrary rather implied and supposed? When it is said that *Paul* baptized *Lydia* and her Household, *Acts* xvi. 15. That the Goaler, and all his, were baptized by him, *ver.* 33. and that he baptized the Household of *Stephanas*, *1 Cor.* i. 16. And especially from that Passage in the *Acts*, *Chap.* ii. 39, where the Apostles in their first Preaching tell the *Jews*, that the *Promises were made to them and to their Children*. Which Expression the *Jews* could no otherwise understand, than according to what they were already in Possession of, namely, that they could and would, initiate their Children into the Christian Religion, bring them under the Obligations of it, and procure to them a Share in those Blessings that belonged to it. Would not all this, put together, rather lead and incline a Man to think, that the Apostles did baptize Children and Infants, than that bold confident Assertion of your Author's, without Proof, *that the Apostles did not baptize any?*

I cannot but remark again your Author's passing over in Silence the third Part of my Query, *The Practice of the Primitive Times as to Infant Baptism*. This would illustrate the Case very much, and sufficiently have explained to us, who were intended to be the Subjects of Baptism, both from the Legal and Evangelical Dispensations. It is a known Rule, That the Sense and Meaning of any Law or Institution is best understood by the general Practice immediately following thereupon; because those that then practis'd it must have much better Opportunities of knowing the Mind of the Legislator, than those that live at a greater Distance possibly can. Now to apply this Rule, we find it to be the general
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Practice and constant Usage in the purest Ages of the Church to baptize Infants; and therefore from such a Foundation in Scripture before laid down, joyn'd with the general Practice of the Church immediately ensuing upon the Institution, we may conclude it a Point indisputable, that it was a divine Institution, an Apostolical Practice, and that Infants ought to be baptis'd. Let your Author look over the Fathers of the Primitive Church? Let him consult *Irenæus*, *Tertullian*, *Origen*, *Dionysius Areopagita*, *St. Cyprian*, *Gregory Nazianzen*, *St. Ambrose*, *St. Chrysostom*, *St. Jerome*, *Paulinus*, *St. Augustine*, with many more in the earliest Centuries, and he will see the constant Practice of Infant Baptism there used and asserted. And had there been any Innovation in this Case, so many great and scrupulous Persons would have discovered it, and made a great Stir about it, (as they did about the Observation of *Easter*) and never have suffer'd it to have been practis'd among them. Let him tell me if he can, of any ancient Heretick that did dare to oppose it, or ever presum'd to offer any thing against it, till *Nicholas Stork* and *Thomas Muncer*, two fanatical and seditious Men in *Germany*, first disturb'd the Christian Church about it, in the Year 1522: Whose Tenets the Great *Cassander* sufficiently confuted and silenc'd, and the State took care to chastise the Boldness and Confidence of the Men with deserved Punishments. This, which your Author scoffingly calls a *Sneer*, I am able to give unquestionable Proof of, when required to do it.

Now to all that has been said before, take in this Account of the Practice of the Primitive Times (which your Author dares not do) and observe from thence what a bold daring Act it is,

to advance Notions so contrary both to Law and Gospel, and the unanimous Consent of all Churches; whose Weight and Authority ought to move all that have any true Notions of Religion, or any Remainders of Sense and good Manners left. Where now are his confident Assertions, so often repeated, *That the Gospel knows nothing of Infants Baptism; That it is not the Institution of Christ to admit 'em to it; That we are false Prophets who teach the People that Infants ought to be baptized, without any Revelation from God to prove it?* Where are his Arguments and Reasons to support his Assertions? If he has any, I challenge him to produce them, and to confront them against such Authority I have brought both from Scripture and Antiquity, to establish the Practice of Infants Baptism, and (to use his own Words) *to make it appear that according to the Institution of Christ in this Case they are to be admitted to that Holy Rite.*

The rest shall follow in due Time.

F I N I S.





